

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
receiving, from a service seeker, an appointment request for a live advice communication with a selected service provider during a specified appointment time;
providing the appointment request to the selected service provider;
once the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, scheduling a live advice communication appointment between the service seeker and the selected service provider; and
connecting the selected service provider with the service seeker for a live advice communication at the specified appointment time.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the appointment request further comprises:
receiving a live advice communication request for a selected service provider;
when the selected service provider is unavailable, providing the requesting service seeker with an appointment request option; and
when the requesting service seeker accepts the appointment request option, receiving the appointment request from the requesting service seeker.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:
determining whether the selected service provider is available during the service seeker specified appointment time;
when the selected service provider is unavailable during the appointment time, determining one or more available appointment times of the selected service provider;
providing the one or more alternate appointment times to the service seeker; and
receiving a selected appointment time from the one or more alternate appointment times once selected by the service seeker.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:
requesting a deposit from the service seeker;
once the deposit is received from the service seeker, verifying a telephone number of the service seeker; and
once the service seeker telephone number is verified, sending an appointment request confirmation to the service seeker.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein scheduling the live advice communication appointment further comprises:

determining whether an appointment acceptance is received from the selected service provider;

once the appointment acceptance is received from the selected service provider, sending an appointment confirmation to the service seeker; and

sending an appointment confirmation to the selected service provider.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein connecting the selected service provider and the service seeker further comprises:

contacting the service seeker via a communications device;

once the service seeker accepts a communication connection from the service provider system, contacting the selected service provider via a communications device; and

once the selected service provider accepts a communications connection from the service provider system, linking the service seeker and the selected service provider via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein linking the service seeker and the selected service provider further comprises:

when the selected service provider fails to accept the communications connection from the service provider system, contacting an alternate system selected service provider within a field of service of the selected service provider as an alternate service provider; and

once the alternate service provider accepts the communications connection from the service provider system, linking the alternate service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

once the call between the service seeker and the alternate service provider is complete, providing the service seeker with a gift from the selected service provider.

9. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

when the service provider is engaged in a live advice communication during the service provider system communication connection, notifying the service provider of the scheduled advice communication appointment;

receiving a response from the service provider to accept/reject the appointment notification;

when the selected service provider accepts the appointment notification, terminating the live advice communication with a current service seeker; and

once the advice communication is terminated, linking the selected service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:

generating a service seeker appointment alert within an appointment screen of the selected service provider, wherein the appointment screen includes a list of each service provider accepted appointment and a list of alerts for each pending appointment requests received by the selected service provider.

11. A method comprising:

selecting a service provider from a field of service available from a service provider system;

requesting an appointment with the selected service provider during a selected appointment time;

once the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, receiving an appointment confirmation notification from the service provider system; and

connecting, via the service provider system, with the selected service provider for a live advice communication during the selected appointment time.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein requesting an appointment further comprises:

receiving a deposit request from a service provider system for engaging in an appointment with the selected service provider;

complying with the deposit request received from the service provider system;

verifying a telephone number of the service seeker with the service provider system;

once the service seeker telephone number is verified, viewing an appointment request message screen to enter in additional text regarding the appointment request for the selected service provider; and

once the appointment request is complete, transmitting the appointment request to the selected service provider.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein requesting an appointment further comprises:

requesting a live advice communication with a selected service provider available from the service provider system;

when the selected service provider is unavailable at a time of the live advice request, receiving an option for initiating an appointment request with the selected service provider;

when the appointment request is accepted by the service seeker, selecting an appointment time for engaging in a live advice communication with the selected service provider; and

providing the appointment request to the selected service provider.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein connecting the selected service provider with the service seeker further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system via a communications medium during the selected appointment time;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system; and

once the communications connection from the service provider system is accepted, engaging in the live advice communication with the selected service provider via communications mediums.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein connecting with the selected service provider further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system;

when a communications connection request to the selected service provider is declined, receiving an option for engaging in a live advice communication with a system selected alternative service provider;

when the option to engage in live advice communication with the alternate service provider is accepted, engaging in a live advice communication with the alternate service provider; and

once the live advice communication is complete, receiving a gift from the service provider system, such that the gift is deducted from the selected service provider.

16. A method comprising:

receiving, by a selected service provider, an appointment request for a live advice communication with a service seeker;

determining whether the selected service provider is available during an appointment time specified in the appointment request;

when the service provider is available during the appointment time, accepting the appointment request for a live advice communication with the service seeker; and

connecting, via the service provider system, with the service seeker for a live advice communication via communications mediums during a selected appointment time.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein receiving the appointment request further comprises:

viewing an appointments listing page of the selected service provider, including a listing of each accepted appointment request of the selected service provider and a listing of one or more appointment alerts for pending appointment requests of the selected service provider;

selecting an appointment alert from the one or more alerts listed in the service provider appointment screen;

when the service provider is available at an appointment time specified in the appointment alert, accepting the selected appointment alert; and

otherwise, declining the selected appointment alert.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein connecting with the requesting service seeker further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system at the selected appointment time via a communications medium;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system; and

once the communications connection from the service provider system is accepted, engaging in a live advice communication with the service seeker via the communications medium.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein connecting with the requesting service seeker further comprises:

receiving appointment notification during a live advice communication with a current service seeker;

determining whether to accept/reject the appointment alert notification;

when the appointment notification is accepted, terminating the live advice communication with the current service seeker; and

once the live advice communication is terminated with the current service seeker, engaging in a live advice communications connection with the service seeker via the communications mediums.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein connecting with the requesting service seeker further comprises:

receiving an appointment notification communication request from the service provider system during a live advice communication with a current service seeker;

declining the appointment request from the service provider system; and

when the service seeker engages in a live advice communication with a systems selected alternate service provider, compensating the service seeker for failing to honor the live advice communications appointment.

21. A computer readable storage medium including program instructions that direct a system to function in a specified manner when executed by a processor, the program instructions comprising:

- receiving, from a service seeker, an appointment request for a live advice communication with a selected service provider during a specified appointment time;
- providing the appointment request to the selected service provider;
- once the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, scheduling a live advice communication appointment between the service seeker and the selected service provider; and
- connecting the selected service provider with the service seeker for a live advice communication at the specified appointment time.

22. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein receiving the appointment request further comprises:

- receiving a live advice communication request for a selected service provider;
- when the selected service provider is unavailable, providing the requesting service seeker with an appointment request option; and
- when the requesting service seeker accepts the appointment request option, receiving the appointment request from the requesting service seeker.

23. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:

- determining whether the selected service provider is available during the service seeker specified appointment time;
- when the selected service provider is unavailable during the appointment time, determining one or more available appointment times of the selected service provider;
- providing the one or more alternate appointment times to the service seeker; and
- receiving a selected appointment time from the one or more alternate appointment times once selected by the service seeker.

24. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:

- requesting a deposit from the service seeker;

once the deposit is received from the service seeker, verifying a telephone number of the service seeker; and

once the service seeker telephone number is verified, sending an appointment request confirmation to the service seeker.

25. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein scheduling the live advice communication appointment further comprises:

determining whether an appointment acceptance is received from the selected service provider;

once the appointment acceptance is received from the selected service provider, sending an appointment confirmation to the service seeker; and

sending an appointment confirmation to the selected service provider.

26. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein connecting the selected service provider and the service seeker further comprises:

contacting the service seeker via a communications device;

once the service seeker accepts a communication connection from the service provider system, contacting the selected service provider via a communications device; and

once the selected service provider accepts a communications connection from the service provider system, linking the service seeker and the selected service provider via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

27. The computer readable storage medium of claim 26, wherein linking the selected service seeker and the service provider further comprises:

when the selected service provider fails to accept the communications connection from the service provider system, contacting an alternate system selected service provider within a field of service of the selected service provider as an alternate service provider; and

once the alternate service provider accepts the communications connection from the service provider system, linking the alternate service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

28. The computer readable storage medium of claim 27, further comprising:

once the call between the service seeker and the alternate service provider is complete, providing the service seeker with a gift from the selected service provider.

29. The computer readable storage medium of claim 26, further comprising:
when the service provider is engaged in a live advice communication during the service provider system communication connection, notifying the service provider of the scheduled advice communication appointment;

receiving a response from the service provider to accept/reject the appointment notification;

when the selected service provider accepts the appointment notification, terminating the live advice communication with a current service seeker; and

once the advice communication is terminated, linking the selected service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication.

30. The computer readable storage medium of claim 21, wherein providing the appointment request further comprises:

generating a service seeker appointment alert within an appointment screen of the selected service provider, wherein the appointment screen includes a list of each service provider accepted appointment and a list of alerts for each pending appointment requests received by the selected service provider.

31. A computer readable storage medium including program instructions that direct a system to function in a specified manner when executed by a processor, the program instructions comprising:

selecting a service provider from a field of service available from a service provider system;

requesting an appointment with the selected service provider during a selected appointment time;

once the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, receiving an appointment confirmation notification from the service provider system; and

connecting, via the service provider system, with the selected service provider for a live advice communication during the selected appointment time.

32. The computer readable storage medium of claim 31, wherein requesting an appointment further comprises:

receiving a deposit request from a service provider system for engaging in an appointment with the selected service provider;

complying with the deposit request received from the service provider system;

verifying a telephone number of the service seeker with the service provider system;

once the service seeker telephone number is verified, viewing an appointment request message screen to enter in additional text regarding the appointment request for the selected service provider; and

once the appointment request is complete, transmitting the appointment request to the selected service provider.

33. The computer readable storage medium of claim 31, wherein requesting an appointment further comprises:

requesting a live advice communication with a selected service provider available from the service provider system;

when the selected service provider is unavailable at a time of the live advice request, receiving an option for initiating an appointment request with the selected service provider;

when the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, selecting an appointment time for engaging in a live advice communication with the selected service provider; and

providing the appointment request to the selected service provider.

34. The computer readable storage medium of claim 31, wherein connecting the selected service provider with the service seeker further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system via a communications medium during the selected appointment time;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system; and

once the communications connection from the service provider system is accepted, engaging in the live advice communication with the selected service provider via communications mediums.

35. The computer readable storage medium of claim 31, wherein connecting with the selected service provider further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system;

when a communications connection request to the selected service provider is declined, receiving an option for engaging in a live advice communication with a system selected alternative service provider;

when the option to engage in live advice communication with the alternate service provider is accepted, engaging in a live advice communication with the alternate service provider; and

once the live advice communication is complete, receiving a gift from the service provider system, such that the gift is detected from the selected service provider.

36. A computer readable storage medium including program instructions that direct a system to function in a specified manner when executed by a processor, the program instructions comprising:

receiving, by a selected service provider, an appointment request for a live advice communication with a service seeker;

determining whether the selected service provider is available during an appointment time specified in the appointment request;

when the service provider is available during the appointment time, accepting the appointment request for a live advice communication with the service seeker; and

connecting, via the service provider system, with the service seeker for a live advice communication via communications mediums during a selected appointment time.

37. The computer readable storage medium of claim 36, wherein receiving the appointment request further comprises:

viewing an appointments listing page of the selected service provider, including a listing of each accepted appointment request of the selected service provider and a listing of one or more appointment alerts for pending appointment requests of the selected service provider;

selecting an appointment alert from the one or more alerts listed in the service provider appointment screen;

when the service provider is available at an appointment time specified in the appointment alert, accepting the selected appointment alert; and

otherwise, declining the selected appointment alert.

38. The computer readable storage medium of claim 36, wherein connecting with the selected service seeker further comprises:

receiving a communications connection request from the service provider system at the selected appointment time via a communications medium;

accepting the communications connection from the service provider system; and

once the communications connection from the service provider system is accepted, engaging in a live advice communication with the service seeker via the communications medium.

39. The computer readable storage medium of claim 36, wherein connecting with the selected service seeker further comprises:

receiving appointment notification during a live advice communication with a current service seeker;

determining whether to accept/reject the appointment alert notification;

when the appointment notification is accepted, terminating the live advice communication with the current service seeker; and

once the live advice communication is terminated with the current service seeker, engaging in a live advice communications connection with the service seeker via the communications mediums.

40. The computer readable storage medium of claim 36, wherein connecting with the selected service seeker further comprises:

receiving an appointment notification communication request from the service provider system during a live advice communication with a current service seeker;

declining the appointment request from the service provider system; and

when the service seeker engages in a live advice communication with a systems selected alternate service provider, compensating the service seeker for failing to honor the live advice communications appointment.

41. A service provider scheduling system, comprising:

a processor having circuitry to execute instructions;

a communications interface coupled to the processor, the communications interface to link service seekers with selected service provider for live advice communication via communications devices of the service seekers and selected service providers;

an appointments database including a record for each schedule and pending appointment between a service seeker and a selected service provider;

a storage device coupled to the processor, having sequences of instructions stored therein, which when executed by the processor cause the processor to:

receive, from a service seeker, an appointment request for a live advice communication with a selected service provider during a specified appointment time, provide the appointment request to the selected service provider.

once the appointment request is accepted by the selected service provider, schedule a live advice communication appointment between the service seeker and the selected service provider, and

connect the selected service provider with the service seeker for a live advice communication at the specified appointment time.

42. The system of claim 41, further comprising:

a service provider database including each service provider available from the system; and

a system interface to provide a service seeker with a list of available fields of service, accept a field of service desired by the service seeker, provide the service seeker with a list of one or more service providers stored in the service provider database which match a field of service desired by the user, and a receive a selection from the user for a selected service provider.

43. The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the instruction to connect the selected service provider and the service seeker further causes the processor to:

contact the service seeker via a communications device;

once the service seeker accepts a communication connection from the service provider system, contact the selected service provider via a communications device; and

once the selected service provider accepts a communications connection from the service provider system, link the service seeker and the selected service provider via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

44. The instruction of claim 43, wherein the instruction to link the selected service seeker and the service provider further causes the processor to:

when the selected service provider fails to accept the communications connection from the service provider system, contact an alternate system selected service provider within a field of service of the selected service provider as an alternate service provider; and

once the alternate service provider accepts the communications connection from the service provider system, link the alternate service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication therebetween.

45. The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the instruction to connecting the selected service provider and the service seeker further causes the processor to:

when the service provider is engaged in a live advice communication during the service provider system communication connection, notify the service provider of the scheduled advice communication appointment;

receive a response from the service provider to accept/reject the appointment notification;

when the selected service provider accepts the appointment notification, terminate the live advice communication with a current service seeker; and

once the advice communication is terminated, link the selected service provider and the service seeker via the communications devices for a live advice communication.